

SENATE BILL 2358

By Gresham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to education.

WHEREAS, states and territories regulate higher education within their borders, with varying requirements for out-of-state institutions that wish to conduct business within this state; and

WHEREAS, cross-state online education offered by colleges and universities is expanding dramatically; and

WHEREAS, at the present time, there is no alternative to each institution separately pursuing any state authorization in each state and territory where it enrolls students; and

WHEREAS, consequently, thousands of institutions are required to contact and work through as many as fifty-four (54) states and territories, and, sometimes, with multiple regulatory agencies in those states; and

WHEREAS, the current process is inefficient, costly and not effective in supporting access to high quality distance education throughout the country; now therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

49-7-157.

(a) There is created a special joint legislative study committee to consider, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding the state authorization reciprocity agreements (SARA).

(b) The committee shall be composed of three (3) members of the senate, to be appointed by the speaker of the senate, and three (3) members of the house of representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

(c) All appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the committee upon the request of the chair.

(d) The committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the general assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect co-chairs and such other officers as the committee deems necessary.

(e) The committee shall timely report its findings to the speakers of the senate and the house of representatives and the chairs of the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives, no later than January 10, 2015, but the committee shall continue to exist until such time as the speakers determine.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014, the public welfare requiring it.